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ON

PAUL AND PAULINISM

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Central BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Modern Religious Problems

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PAUL AND PAULINISM

I

Genesis, says Tertullian in the fifth book of his treatise against Marcion, — *Genesis promised me Paul long ago.* For, he adds (playing upon a Latin rendering of Genesis xlix : 27), *when Jacob was pronouncing typical and prophetic blessings over his sons, he turned to Benjamin and said, "Benjamin is a ravening wolf; in the morning he shall devour his prey, but towards evening he shall provide food." He foresaw that Paul would spring from Benjamin, "a ravening wolf, devouring his prey in the morning" : that is, in early life he would lay waste the flocks of God as a persecutor of the churches; then towards evening he would provide*

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food: that is, in his declining years he would train the sheep of Christ as a teacher of the nations. This fanciful exegesis of the African father brings out three salient features in the career and character of Paul. (*a*) He was a full-blooded Jew by birth, who was keen upon his national faith; (*b*) his religious experience fell into two sharply divided periods; and (*c*) his services to the great Christian mission were rendered during the late afternoon of his life. He did not begin to write the letters by which he is best known till he had been a Christian for about twenty years, and he was over forty when he inaugurated the Gentile propaganda in Asia Minor and Europe.

The first of these features acquires its true significance in the light of the second. Paul received a sound and strict religious training, first from his parents at Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, and then at Jerusalem, whither he was sent to study under Gama-

liel. The rabban belonged like himself to the clan of Benjamin; he was distinguished not only on account of his reverence for the Law, but by his comparatively liberal attitude to Greek culture, — a combination of qualities which should relieve us from the unreal dilemma of referring his great pupil's Judaism to the Hellenistic type or to the rabbinic. Unmistakable traces of both appear in Paul's theology, but the paramount trait of his character was its Pharisaism. With the Sadducees he was totally out of sympathy. His deeply religious nature inclined him to the Pharisaic traditions of his family, for Pharisaism was one of those religious schools which command and welcome moral enthusiasm. *I was circumcised on the eighth day*, he writes in his old age; *I belonged to the race of Israel, to the tribe of Benjamin; I was the Hebrew son of Hebrew parents; in the matter of the Law I was a Pharisee; as for zeal, I per-*

secuted the church; tested by righteousness within the limits of the Law, I proved blameless. . . . You have heard of my erstwhile career as a Jew, how excessively I persecuted and ravaged the church of God, and how I outstripped many of my contemporaries in Jewish pursuits, intensely zealous as I was for the traditions of my fathers. Such words enable us to slip inside the soul of Paul in his pre-Christian days. From the very outset he was proud of his religion, with the moral pride which makes a man feel, especially in his early years, that no sacrifices should be too costly for the sake of the great cause. Whatever he believed, he believed ardently and thoroughly. His was one of those natures which are not satisfied unless in working out and thinking out their faith. Gamaliel had a reputation for mildness and moderation, but his brilliant young pupil flung himself with fanatical zeal into the task of stamp-

ing out the new heresy of the Nazarenes. He must have recognized in its messianic belief a spirit which was fatal to the essential principles of Judaism. The primitive community of the adherents of Jesus at Jerusalem might frequent the temple and continue to act as if their new faith were compatible with the worship and tenets of the Law, but Paul's stringent logic, fostered by his keen religious sense, penetrated to the inward significance of this new movement. The Nazarenes confessed, *Jesus is Lord.* Paul's watchword was, *Jesus is anathema.* He saw nothing but blasphemy in the attempt to connect the glorious messianic hope of Israel with the career of a Galilean peasant who had perished ignominiously by the hands of the Roman authorities.

The vigour with which the Palestinian church was harried had driven a number of refugees, after the martyrdom of Stephen, into the far north, not only to Syrian

Antioch, but eastward to Damascus, in the Nabatæan domain. Paul determined to follow up the latter. His zeal was unslaked, and he succeeded in obtaining permission and authority from the high priest to arrest any Nazarenes whom he could discover in the synagogues of Damascus. The idea was that he should pursue the same short and easy way with these dissenters as had already proved effective. The next news which reached the authorities, however, was that the mission had collapsed; to their disgust and amazement, they learned that their brilliant young agent had become a renegade.

The object of his immediate retiral into the lonely territory east or south of Damascus was to think out, unmolested by his former allies, the bearings of his new position. What had made him a Christian, he invariably confessed, was a vision of the Lord Jesus. And the same vision, which

had arrested him with a flash of light on pagan soil, made him conscious that he had a special vocation to the Gentiles. We do not possess sufficient data for any psychological account of the crisis. But such visions do not happen in a vacuum. The origin of Paul's Christianity was something more than a sunstroke or a fit of epilepsy at noon upon the road to Damascus; it was a revelation, mediated by some profound internal conflict which must have been going on within his soul. We may easily make the mistake of reading too much into the words which came to him in the vision,—*Saul, Saul, why art thou persecuting me? It is ill for thee to kick against the goad,*—but they suggest that his harrying of the Nazarenes had been one of those meritorious actions in vindication of the Law by which he hoped to please God, yet in which he was conscious that he did not gain peace of mind; his recent vehemence may have

been also due in part to the fact that he was fighting down some secret misgivings, occasioned or at any rate deepened by the impression which the people he was attacking made upon his mind. It is natural to think of Stephen in this connexion. Stephen, it is true, did not proclaim the mission to the Gentiles, nor did he assail the validity of the Law. But his reading of Jewish history as a long obstinate resistance to the Spirit of God tallies with the words which we have just quoted, and, although Paul never ranks Stephen's dying vision of the Lord among the appearances of the risen Christ, it was probably an incident which sank deep into his soul. Some uneasiness of this kind, implying that Paul was brooding secretly over the meaning of the new faith, together with a sense of moral despair which grew upon him the more conscientious he strove to be, may be conjectured to have lain under the vision near

Damascus. While they did not produce it, they created an atmosphere for it. Paul himself naturally calls the change abrupt and sudden, just as he emphasizes its divine reality, upon the other hand, by excluding all human influences. But this does not imply necessarily that he had been unconscious till that moment of any mysterious leaning towards the Nazarene faith or of any questionings about his own position before God, any more than it rules out the possibility that, like Wesley, he was helped in his early Christian hours by pious men, whose names were never known. Probably Ananias of Damascus was one of the latter.

Whatever process of reflection Paul went through in Arabia, he left his temporary seclusion with the characteristic resolve that he would consecrate the proselytizing zeal of a Pharisee to the task of spreading the message of a gospel which cut up Pharisaism by the roots. Unfortu-

nately, his movements at this point become rather obscure. We learn, however, that two or three years after his conversion, finding neither Damascus nor Jerusalem a safe or congenial sphere of work, he retired to Syria and Cilicia. There he laboured for nearly fourteen years. The account in Acts xi–xiv, which rests on some reliable Antiochene traditions, narrates that during the latter part of the time he took an active share in the mission at Antioch, the capital of Syria, which had become the headquarters of an aggressive and expansive Gentile mission. But if he wrote any epistles during the period, none has survived. These long years must have been pregnant and formative; they cover his first mission-sphere, and it is a distinct loss to be deprived of any records from his own pen which would throw light upon the inward and outward course of events. Titus was one of his chief converts, but

unluckily the Book of Acts ignores him altogether, as it ignores the first two thirds of these fourteen years. We may feel certain, however, that this protracted mission, especially in its Arabian and pre-Antioch years, did not represent any slow process by means of which Paul became gradually conscious of what his mission and commission to the Gentiles involved. If there was any uncertainty upon the right of Gentiles to believe in Jesus without becoming Jews, it was among the primitive apostles at Jerusalem, who still shared the idea that the object of Jesus was to regenerate Israel primarily in order to inherit the joys and glories of his messianic reign.

If one test of a vision is not only that it transforms the life of the man who receives it, but inspires and enables him to effect a similar change in the life of others, Paul's experience of Jesus Christ answered to this

criterion. From the first he was conscious of a vocation. *He who set me apart from my very birth and called me by his grace was pleased to reveal to me his Son, that I might bring the good news of him to the nations.* Elsewhere, after speaking of the new world which faith in Christ meant and made for him, — *when a man comes to be in Christ, there is a fresh creation,* — he at once adds, *and it is all of God, who reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ and commissioned us to be ministers of the reconciliation, namely, to proclaim that in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, instead of reckoning men's trespasses against them, and that he has entrusted us with the message of reconciliation.* Words like these, in which we get the man's whole life distilled, could not have come from an ordinary believer. Had Paul been content to remain a Jewish Christian after the type of James or Peter,

his career, like that of Christianity, would have been very different. But there is not enough evidence to prove that Paulinism represents the outcome of his mature reflections, after he had emancipated himself from any such Jewish Christian stage. Three incidental allusions have sometimes been taken to imply an immature phase of Paul's Christian life, in practice as well as in theory: viz. (*a*) *If I were still pleasing men, I would not be Christ's servant.*[1] (*b*) *If I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted?*[2] (*c*) *Even though we did know Christ after the flesh, we no longer know him in this way.*[3] None of these passages, however, will support the inference in question. The first means, "If, after all that has happened in my life, I were still trying to curry favour with people, instead of being single-minded, I would be no true servant of Christ. But I do not serve two masters."

[1] Gal. i: 10. [2] Gal. v: 11. [3] 2 Cor. v: 16.

The supposition is purely hypothetical. Whether *men* means the apostles at Jerusalem or men in general, the sense of the words is the same. In the latter case, the insinuation which Paul repudiates would be parallel to that behind (*b*), where again he is retorting upon those who brought up his past against him. Here too it was not his pre-Christian past but his conduct as a Christian apostle, particularly his recent circumcision of Timotheus,[1] which lent plausibility to the charge. This concession was misrepresented by his opponents. They declared, not that Paul secretly considered circumcision to mean a higher stage or level of Christian experience, from which he sought to exclude Christians of Gentile birth, but that in his heart of hearts he really believed circumcision to be a vital element in the Christian praxis, and that he tried to persuade the bulk of Gentile

[1] Acts xvi : 3.

Christians it was unessential simply in order to gain their gratitude by arranging to exempt them from a painful and humiliating rite. This would be time-serving, Paul retorts, and time-servers, whose chief end is popularity, are not served as I am being served! If it is my usual custom to preach a Christianized Pharisaism, based on the observance of Jewish ritual instead of faith in a crucified Christ, why am I persecuted still by people who resent the message of the Cross? The third passage (*c*) is more difficult. Here Paul is not replying to any sneering comment upon his consistency, but contrasting two aspects of Christ which had presented themselves to his mind. One of these, that *after the flesh*, has been interpreted to mean a personal knowledge of Jesus during his life-time on earth, such as the twelve had enjoyed. But it is more than doubtful if Paul ever came in contact with Jesus at Jerusalem. Besides, had this been

his meaning, we should have expected him to say *Jesus* instead of *Christ*, and, at other points, where an allusion to such knowledge would have come in with telling effect, he is silent. The *knowledge of Christ after the flesh* is probably the messianic belief of Pharisaic theology such as Paul had shared in his pre-Christian days. The context of the passage, with its contrast between the inside and the outside view of Christ, militates against the idea that he is referring to some earlier period or phase of his Christian experience, during which he still viewed Jesus under the categories of this Pharisaic messianism. The words are an aside, and like all asides they convey a meaning which is not easily caught. But their import is, "Though as a Jew I knew this type of messiah, — a national hero or official figure, robed in exclusiveness and external glory, — yet now, as a Christian, I know a messiah who *died*

for all." The whole passage confirms the impression that in Galatians i: 15–17 Paul is not reading back into his initial experience of Jesus Christ the richer memories and ampler deposit of the intervening years. From the very outset, a better knowledge of Christ's nature had shone upon him. The crisis of his conversion had been the dawn of a new world. It was as if God had said, *Let there be light, and there was light.*[1] The conception of Jesus as the messiah who had suffered on the cross and risen from the dead was a vision which meant not only a revision of all his previous messianic ideas but a re-casting of his nature; indeed, this radical change, in which his whole nature was melted and moulded by the power of the Lord, completely altered his religious opinions about messiah or the Christ, and the latter change began from the moment when he

[1] 2 Cor. iv: 6.

stumbled to his feet on the highroad outside Damascus. Certainly, after he returned from Arabia, he cannot have hesitated for a moment to preach that the door of faith was open to the Gentiles, and that they did not require to enter the church and kingdom of God through any postern-gate of circumcision.

It was, in fact, the success of the Gentile mission upon these open principles which aroused the suspicions of the narrower Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. Their policy, if left unchallenged, would simply have added another party, that of the Nazarenes, to Judaism. Their interference with the church at Antioch, however, precipitated the issue between Jewish and Gentile Christianity. Whatever authority they had or pretended to have from the twelve apostles, Paul determined to lay the case before the latter. A door must be either open or shut, and he was resolved

to settle once for all the question whether Gentile Christians were obliged to conform to the Jewish Torah, on pain of being regarded, like the uncircumcised proselytes of Judaism, as outsiders, in a more or less secondary and inferior position.

The stricter Jewish Christian party at Jerusalem did not object to pagans becoming believers in Jesus; they simply insisted that, as the divine Torah, ceremonial and moral, was still obligatory, such converts must be circumcised, as Jesus himself had been, and be bound over to observe the legal requirements. Even among the Jews themselves, at this period, it was debated whether circumcision should be enforced on proselytes; possibly the later idea that messiah's appearance would set aside the obligations of the Law was already current in some quarters. But in any case, a strong party in the Jerusalem church leaned to the strict views of the dominant Pharisaism.

No personal record of the primitive apostles is extant, to show how they felt on the matter. The narrative in the fifteenth chapter of Acts is the semi-official and later version of a church historian who naturally sought to soften the sharp edges of the original controversy. Paul's account, in the second chapter of Galatians, states the case bluntly from his own standpoint. But even the latter shows that the leading apostles as a whole were too large-minded to support the narrower Jewish Christians against Paul. They did not demur to the gospel which Paul preached, that is, to its essential principles of faith. Upon the contrary, he managed to persuade them that it was *the* gospel, as effective in his hands as in theirs. The concordat ultimately arrived at was that while James, Peter, and John should prosecute the Jewish Christian mission, Paul and Barnabas were to devote themselves to the Gentile Christians. The

respective spheres of operation were thus delimited roughly, in order to avoid needless friction. But the treaty involved the toleration of Paul's gospel to Gentile Christians, and in a case like this, toleration of practice was equivalent to a tacit recognition of principle. The propaganda of the extreme anti-Pauline party was checkmated. But the party had other moves to make; Paul soon found that his difficulties were not over. Shortly afterwards, Peter was guilty of vacillation during a visit to Antioch. It was more easy to agree to a principle than to act upon it consistently, and while he began by associating freely with Gentile Christians, nevertheless, *when certain persons came from James*, as Paul contemptuously put it, *he began to draw back*. The plain sense of the words is that these emissaries of James believed, as Paul believed, that they had some authority from James for interposing. What instruc-

tions they had, and how far they went beyond them, we cannot ascertain. Paul dealt not with them, but with Peter, as the responsible authority on the spot. He censured the senior apostle sharply for his practical opportunism. What passed between Paul and the emissaries of James is left untold; all we know is that these high and hard churchmen pursued him ever afterwards with a counter-mission, spreading insinuations against his character, discrediting his authority, and impugning the adequacy of his gospel. Hitherto his opponents had been pagans and Jews. Now, throughout his second sphere of operations, they included Christian Judaists. If the mission treaty of Jerusalem was drawn up with any idea of removing Paul from the danger-zone of the narrower party, it proved a failure.

The quarrel at Antioch had another unfortunate result for Paul. It deprived him

of his former colleague, Barnabas. Barnabas was of the willow rather than of the oak order, and Peter's bad example had carried him away. Paul was not in a mood to be conciliatory. He had lost confidence in Barnabas, and eventually chose Silas or Silvanus, who belonged to the more liberal party in the Jerusalem church, as a coadjutor in the new mission. For he now was planning a second enterprise. His range of operations widened. The conception of a mission to the world had fastened on his imagination, and he went further afield than he had yet gone. After revisiting Syria and Cilicia, he broke new ground successfully in northern Galatia, but evidently he did not feel free to continue work in Asia. A mysterious attraction drew him west, and eventually he started upon the great mission to Europe, or rather to Macedonia and Achaia. The preliminary campaign occupied nearly three years. When this was

over, he returned upon his track to Galatia, and finally settled down for a couple of years at Ephesus, where he could keep in touch with Asia and Europe for the purpose of supervising his churches in these regions. Before his last visit to the European churches, he had written the extant letters to Thessalonica, Galatia, and Corinth. The fruitful evening, of which Tertullian spoke, had opened, so far as the ministry of writing was concerned.

The problem of a third sphere now emerged. What was to be his next mission? Not the southern Mediterranean. Egypt apparently was already being evangelized by other Christians, and Paul's guiding principle was to find virgin soil for his gospel. In a letter to the church of Rome, written towards the end of his European mission, he summed up the situation thus: *From Jerusalem right round to Illyria I have fully preached the gospel of Christ,*

my great aim being to evangelize places where Christ's name has not been mentioned, in order to avoid building on another man's foundation. Rome he had often desired to visit. But meanwhile Rome, like Egypt, had been evangelized by unknown Christians from Palestine or Egypt. The one sphere available lay in Spain or the western Mediterranean; he felt shut up to this and proposed to travel thither, taking Rome on the way, after he had discharged a pious duty to the church at Jerusalem by handing over the proceeds of a collection which his Galatian, Macedonian, and Achaian churches had generously made on behalf of the Christian poor within the Jewish capital. His plans, however, were rudely interrupted by an outburst of Jewish fanaticism. He was arrested by the Roman authorities at Jerusalem, detained for two years in prison at Cæsarea Philippi, and finally despatched to be tried as a

Roman citizen before the emperor at Rome. So far as we can learn, he was never set free. The projected tour to Spain fell through. One or two letters written during his imprisonment survive. Those to the churches of Colossæ and Philippi reveal some of his maturer ideas upon the person of Christ especially; the private notes, such as that to Philemon and the fragments imbedded in the pastoral Epistles, are of purely personal interest. Otherwise, no reliable traditions as to his fortunes in Rome have been preserved, and even Luke's record of the events between the arrest in Jerusalem and the arrival in Rome leaves several serious *lacunæ*. A mist gathers round the end as well as round the opening of the apostle's life. All we know is that he must have been put to death under Nero about the middle of the seventh decade.

II

THE history of primitive Christianity has been sometimes written as if it were a Pauline epic. Paul is by far the greatest personality known to us within the church of the first century; it had no leader, no evangelist, no thinker, like him. But it would be unhistorical, for example, to identify Gentile Christianity with Pauline Christianity, any more than the primitive church with Jewish Christianity, or to assume that, because Paul's Epistles precede the Gospels, to which alone, in point of size and value, they rank second, they therefore reflect the dim, common, central view of Christianity as it was preached and lived throughout the early church. There was a distinctive stamp of thought and style in Paul's Epistles. He was the first theolo-

gian of the faith, the master-mind of his age within the Christian church. But while an original genius has his own contribution of independent insight to offer, he does not ignore the truths which his contemporaries have already recognized. He either repeats them in his own way or brings out their unsuspected significance, and one problem for later ages is to determine how far he transcends the environment to which he is indebted and of which he must be in one sense representative. This is the question which we are bound to ask ourselves as we confront the appearance of Paul and Paulinism within the primitive church. The following pages are an attempt to state it, rather than to answer it, in bare outline.

The safest temper in which to enter upon such a survey is a thoroughgoing scepticism of all historical reconstructions which leave the early Christian period like a neatly coloured map, with the dominant

spheres of Paulinism, Jewish Christianity, and so forth, spaced out rigidly. The problem is too complex, we might almost say that it is too human, for solutions of this kind. Assuming, however, as we must, that Paul's conception of the gospel had a *cachet* of its own which entitles us to call his method of statement by the convenient term of "Paulinism," let us try to gauge very briefly what seems to have been most characteristic and distinctive in his preaching.

It goes without saying that he was not the first to proclaim that Jesus Christ was the one hope for men. Before he had ceased to be a pupil of Gamaliel, the primitive Christians at Jerusalem had confessed that *there is no other name under heaven whereby we must be saved.* Paul was not even the first to preach the gospel to Gentiles, though he was the first to do so on a large scale and with a thorough grasp of all

that it involved. He was not the first to connect the death and resurrection of Jesus with the forgiveness of sins. This formed part of the common gospel preached throughout the early church. *I handed on to you*, he told the Christians at Corinth, *first of all that which I myself had received: namely, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures* (i. e. of the Old Testament), *and that he was buried, and that he rose on the third day according to the scriptures, and that he was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve; after that he was seen by above five hundred brothers at once, the majority of whom are alive to this day, though some sleep in death; after that he was seen by James, then by all the apostles, and finally by myself too. . . . Be it I then or they, such is what we preach and such was your belief.* It is curious and at the same time unfortunate that the three specific refer-

ences to *my gospel* in the Pauline literature throw very little light upon the problem of the relationship between what Paul received and what he originated. Romans ii: 17 does not reflect a distinctive idea of Paul; neither does Romans xvi: 25, even if it is accepted as a genuine word of the apostle, while the Paulinist who wrote 2 Timothy ii: 8 (see 1 Timothy i: 11) simply echoes Romans i: 3, 4. The general impression left by these passages is, as we might expect, that the characteristic traits of Paul's gospel were visible in what he preached about Jesus Christ. What stamped his Christianity as his own was his estimate of the person and work of Jesus as the Son of God. Even his ethical conceptions do not differentiate him so markedly from the primitive church as his doctrinal. For one thing, his ethic at bottom is usually in line with that of Jesus as we find it reflected in the earliest traditions of

the Palestinian church, and for another thing, his ethic is simply the application and issue of that faith in Jesus Christ which supplied him with material for the statement and enforcement of moral obligations. Paulinism, in short, was the outcome of the apostle's attempt to think out for himself the relations of the Lord Jesus Christ to God, the Law, the universe, and the church. His interpretation draws upon several sources, which are more or less visible. One is the piety and prophecies of the Old Testament. Another is his Pharisaic theology, with its belief in angels, in the resurrection, in judgment, in inspiration, and so forth. Another lies in such ideas of paganism, determinism, natural religion, etc., as were familiar to him from religious literature like the Wisdom of Solomon, or in conceptions such as are familiar to us, at any rate, in the pages of his contemporary, Philo. Popular Stoicism and the mysteries

may also be felt vibrating through one or two sections of his system. But the supreme source lay in a vivid personal experience of Jesus Christ, as he verified that in himself and in the lives of others. Amid the changing, ranging fancies of the age, which swayed from one form of mythology or ritual to another, he carried steadily what he termed *the mind of Christ*, his consciousness of Jesus as the absolute and unique Lord of all, his conviction that through Jesus the world was coherent and intelligible as otherwise it could not be. There were idiosyncrasies in his thought, there were daring flights of speculation, in which few of his contemporaries or successors in the church could follow him; but the fundamental faith which underlay his gospel was neither an idiosyncrasy nor a speculation. Paul was a Christian before he was a Paulinist, and even when he is most independent and unique, most tech-

nical in his dialectic and most original in his exposition, the controlling interest of his argument is to draw out what appeared to him the significance of all that was implied in the Jesus whom he and his fellow-Christians worshipped as their Lord.

Thus the sources of a Pauline idea are less important, from our point of view, than what Paul drew from them. Wherever the fruit was gathered and on whatever soil it had originally grown, he pressed the grapes himself and poured the new wine into his own wine-skins. Hence, in order to appreciate the quality of this Paulinism, as distinct from the wine of thought which nourished other Christians, it is essential to begin with some fundamental conception common, in germ at least, to both. The most vital and central is that of the Spirit, in relation to the person of Christ and to the Christian experience. It is from this, and not from any dialectic about justification, that our estimate of the

subject ought to start. While the primitive apostolic view regarded the Spirit as the endowment which Jesus received at baptism for his messianic vocation upon earth, deeper reflection upon the significance of the Lord's personality soon led to a double development of this relationship between the Spirit and Jesus. On the one hand, a growing conviction of his divine nature could not rest satisfied with any tradition which left his antecedents unaccounted for; consequently the Spirit came to be associated with his birth. On the other hand, and at an earlier date, the function of the Spirit was associated with his resurrection : Jesus, it was held, became truly messiah when he was raised from the dead. Some traces of this conception lie in juxtaposition with the baptism-idea, even inside the primitive apostolic tradition, but it was Paul who gave fullest expression to it. This was only natural, as he did not belong to the circle of dis-

ciples who had known Jesus on earth, and as his first experience of the Lord was a vision of Jesus as the risen and exalted Christ. The reality of Christ's nature was Spirit, on his view; Jesus was installed or constituted Son of God with full powers by the resurrection, which revealed and realized his true nature as life-giving Spirit. His life in the flesh had limited him. It was a phase of being which could not do justice to him. But when that temporary impoverishment of nature was over, the heavenly reality shone out in its fulness. The Spirit radiated on men, it was poured into their hearts, as the Spirit of one who had died and risen for the sake of men. We must extinguish, however, the misconception that Paul regarded the Spirit as acting on the lines of a natural force in the evolution of the religious life. To him it meant the gracious power of God which evoked faith in Jesus as the crucified and risen Christ and then mediated to the

receptive, obedient life all that the Lord was and did for his own people.

The Spirit, in this usage of Paul, is not to be regarded as equivalent to the mere influence of God. It includes an ontological as well as an ethical element, in modern parlance, and this applies not simply to the glorified nature of the risen Christ, but to the believing man upon whom the vital power of that nature streams out. The Spirit affects the organism of the human spirit; it is hyper-physical as well as moral in its working. Paul shrank, for example, with Pharisaic dislike, from any Hellenic conception of the immortality of the soul apart from a body. His realism made him shudder at any idea of disembodiment. It is not possible to determine his exact view of the risen body, which he regarded as essential to the risen life; sometimes he suggests that the present body will be transformed, sometimes that an entirely fresh body will be ours; but he

certainly believed in the creation of a new organism by the Spirit which should be adequate to the needs of the new spirit.

Upon the opposite side Paul safeguarded his conception against vague fancies by identifying the Spirit of God, which had been promised as a messianic gift, with the Spirit of Jesus the Christ. This association of the idea with the personality of Jesus lent it precision and reality. It was not a mere force or a supernatural power like the numerous spirits and oracles in the pagan world; the Spirit of Christ is to Paul *the* Spirit. *The Lord*, he once said, *is the Spirit.* To be in the Spirit means not ecstasy and transports but a life in Christ, an identification or incorporation of one's self with him, which differs on the one hand from the reveries of a mystical pantheism, and on the other from the frenzy of prophetic raptures.

This identification was one of Paul's most characteristic and fruitful achievements in

the field of Christian doctrine. Jesus was the Christ of God, and the proof of that was the Spirit. So far Paul and his contemporaries were at one. Where he went beyond them was in his definition of that proof. To the primitive church in Jerusalem the death of Jesus seemed primarily a crime of the Jews which, in God's order of providence, was connected with the forgiveness of sins. The resurrection of Jesus led them to seek proofs of this in Old Testament prophecy, and to anticipate the speedy return of Jesus in full messianic glory in order to complete the establishment of the divine kingdom. Meantime the ecstatic phenomena of the Spirit were hailed, according to Joel's prophecy, as the harbingers of this final era. Paul took what was at once a wider and a deeper view. Though he never appealed, as the primitive church did, to the miracles of Jesus as proof of his messianic authority, he too regarded the contemporary phenomena of the Spirit

as an authentic proof of Christ's messianic position. Had there been no resurrection of Jesus, there would have been no Spirit visible and audible in the lives of believing men. But the Spirit came to represent not so much an ecstatic as an ethical power to Paul; it was the vital principle of the Christian life, rather than an endowment for special occasions, and he verified it, not in sudden raptures or transient fits of religious emotion or any mysterious excitement of the personality, but in the normal life of the Christian within the church. The vine of the primitive church throve on volcanic soil. But the ardent hope of the end was not nourished upon mere inferences from prophecy; it was rooted in the leaf-mould of experience. Only, this experience was an infinitely richer and deeper thing to Paul than to most of his contemporaries; what they took usually to be primary seemed to him secondary and subsidiary. It was one of

those changes of emphasis in religion which are epoch-making. He did believe that miraculous, intermittent powers were an endowment of the Spirit; he was conscious of possessing them himself, and he included them among the gifts of the Spirit to the church. God *supplies you with the Spirit*, he told the Christians of Galatia, *and works miracles among you*. And yet the characteristic outcome of the Spirit, after all, lay not in extraordinary phenomena, but in *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, beneficence, fidelity, meekness, and self-control.*

It was along this line that Paul commonly connected the Spirit with his eschatology. Such effects of the Spirit were to him the first-fruits and pledge of a final bliss which could not be enjoyed until the believer was delivered from the thwarting and corrupting influences of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Sometimes, as in 1 Thessalonians, the Spirit as the power of the Christian experi-

ence was not directly related to the ardent hope of the end; the doctrinal position here lies closer to the simple and popular piety of the churches; as a rule, however, the convinced hope of the end is allied to that faith-mysticism of the Christian's union with Christ which is well known to all readers of the Epistles. One germ of the latter conception lay in the primitive view of baptism into the name of Jesus, which implied an identification of the recipient with the nature of the Lord; but Paul developed the idea in his own way, eschatologically and otherwise.

The eschatological aspect of the Spirit can also be traced even within the conception of Christ's death in relation to the Law, on which Paul generally based his faith-mysticism. Into the ramifications of this theory we cannot enter here, but the salient features of it are quite familiar and they will suffice for our present purpose. Obviously, the fact that Jesus had died under the Law

compelled Paul to readjust his inherited ideas about the Law, Israel, and God. The significance of that death lay in the sinless nature of Jesus. The primitive church as a rule was content to view the crucifixion in the light of the mysterious prophecy of God's suffering servant in Isaiah liii, interpreted by the current Jewish belief in the expiatory value of the sufferings and death of the righteous. Paul assumed the latter as axiomatic, though he never worked much with the Isaianic prophecy. Jesus, he held, voluntarily took the place of sinful men as they lay under the curse and condemnation of a Law whose statutes they were unable to keep. To his sombre vision, as he looked behind and around him, Sin and Death, like allied powers, were crushing men with all the added momentum which they had acquired during the ages since Adam first disobeyed. But Jesus interposed. The innocent suffered for the guilty. He graciously

bore in his own person the consequence of sin for men, and this vicarious endurance of sin's penalty availed before God to justify, or save from the divine wrath at the end, all who accepted him as the Christ of God.

Such a forensic theory, which represents an attempt to interpret in terms of Pharisaic theology the relations between the death of Christ and the guilt rather than the power of sin, appears to ignore the Spirit and also to make faith little more than intellectual assent to a doctrine. But when we cease to isolate it or to regard it as the primary basis of his theology, it acquires a slightly different aspect. What is meant negatively by justification and positively by adoption into sonship is participation in the spiritual nature of Jesus Christ; it is not some formal preliminary to life in the Spirit. In one sense, even, it is prospective, since, although believers are now free from condemnation, this assures them of final acquittal and also in-

troduces them to an experience of union with Christ which is not fully realized until the end. While the security of acquittal might be conceived in such a way as to reduce Christ to the level of a mere functionary or executive agent, — a tendency which beset several of the messianic categories, — Paul avoided this unethical abstraction by conceiving justification as an act of grace. The redeeming death of Jesus Christ, which assured Christians of their future and final standing before God, was to him far more than a messianic episode; he saw in it the supreme revelation of God's heart, the sacrifice of his beloved Son, and the free love of the Son himself. Christ had the unshared glory of having not only shared but borne the shame of sinful men. Furthermore, the character of this divine redemption which underlay the experience of the justified and forgiven man involved a similar conception of its aim. Since the sonship of Jesus was

one of spirit rather than of vocation, his work for men meant their transformation into his own likeness, the restoration of the divine ideal at the creation. The eternal life, for which justification was the condition, was a life of sonship, such as Christ, *the firstborn among many brothers*, enjoyed with God the Father. To Paul, the term "Son of God," as applied to Jesus, had a richer content than that of "messiah"; it implied the Spirit, and the relation of the Spirit to human faith was deeper than any forensic or juridical categories. The spiritual personality, which was the end of the redeeming purpose, and for which Paul is fond of using the semi-technical term *righteousness*, cannot be supposed to originate with any formal verdict or promise of acquittal on God's part, or with any formal assent upon man's. The saving faith of Paul's theology had the three elements which constitute any genuine faith. The believing man

had to believe certain facts about Jesus, on the witness of historical tradition. Otherwise his confession, "Jesus is the Lord or the Christ," would have been meaningless. His faith also was doctrinal or intellectual, in so far as it included an assent to some theoretical explanation of the meaning which attached to Christ's action. Furthermore and fundamentally, it denoted personal confidence. Of these three elements, that of personal appropriation or trust was the greatest for Paul, though we cannot always understand the scale of relative values which he assigned to them. Where faith seems almost identified with belief or assent, is in his theoretical and polemical exposition of that religious standing which, as a result of Christ's death and resurrection, he already experienced in the freedom and vitality of his personal faith. He seems to have viewed his faith-mysticism as homogeneous with his juridical view of the atonement, not as

an alternative. In any case — and this is of cardinal importance — the former was not a supplement to the latter, which succeeded in getting faith under weigh for the course of the new life. The nexus between the forensic and the ethical aspects must lie somewhere in the faith which affirms the meaning of Christ's death and produces the new freedom.

There are three aspects or applications of the Spirit, in Paul's exposition of the Christian experience, which may be selected to illustrate how his deeper mind broke through the restrictions of less vital theories upon the nature of faith as determined by the nature of its divine object.

(*a*) The first occurs in the famous antithesis between the legal constitution of Israel and the new Christian order, as letter and Spirit respectively. His argument in 2 Corinthians iii: 6–iv: 6 is that the practical effect of the Law is to produce an unspiritual, dead-

ening legalism. This would be hotly denied by his Jewish opponents, who would also charge him with confusing the moral and the ceremonial law. Paul's contention might be supported by the plea that there may be a morality which is as external as any ritual system. At any rate, generalizing from his own unhappy experience, he held that the influence of the Law was deadening and oppressive, whereas, instead of anxious perplexity about whether or not one has kept all the statutory regulations, a glad, free confidence, born of a new vitality, inspired the Christian. *The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.* This is the superior and surpassing glory of the Spirit or of righteousness (for the two terms are correlative here). The Lord Jesus, who as Spirit dominates the new order of being, not only is the image of God, but has the power of transforming Christians into the same image or glory by the influence of his Spirit upon theirs.

There is a characteristic play upon the double sense of *glory* as material brilliance and also as the substance of the radiant heavenly being shared by Christ and Christians; but the practical implication is that the entire Christian experience from first to last, with all its freshness and freedom, is determined by Christ's possession of the divine Spirit in its fulness and by his communication of it to believing men. This fundamental doctrine of Paulinism, the supersession of the Law by the Spirit, broke with the rabbinic doctrine that the Law was given by God as the remedy for the evil impulse or *yezer*. Preoccupation with the Torah, the rabbis taught, kept the pious from falling under the sway of the evil impulse, and a passage like Genesis iv : 7 was interpreted in the light of such a theory. Paul reversed this function of the Law. Instead of a remedy, he declared it had proved an aggravation to sin. *When the commandment came,*

sin revived. Like the rabbis, Paul declined to connect the origin of the evil *yezer* with Satan, though he still viewed it as a power within man and also in a sense as foreign to him; but, unlike them, he made no attempt to connect it with God, or to explain its genesis in relation to providence. The animistic presuppositions of his belief at this point are not worked out. But the help which, according to rabbinic doctrine, God vouchsafed to man in his struggles against the evil instinct, was taken up by Paul into his remarkable conception of the Spirit striving inwardly against the lusts of the flesh in the realization of the new righteousness or spiritual personality. On the other hand, he never regarded the flesh as inherently evil. His language is often tinged with the practical dualism of earnest piety, but he did not share the Hellenistic tendency to view the flesh or material constitution of man as inherently and hopelessly

corrupt. The flesh had become the seat and headquarters of sin, but the Christian could live the life of the Spirit in the flesh. He could and did. *The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in God's Son, who loved me and gave himself for me.* When a man yielded his will to the contact of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, he got the upper hand of the flesh. The new vital principle dominated his being, physical as well as moral and mental; it transformed his nature into a spiritual personality, independent of external statutes and controlled or rather inspired by the very Spirit of the indwelling Christ. For, while the Spirit represents to Paul, as to the primitive church, the creative activity of God, the medium through which He achieves his purpose, the apostle mainly connects this power with the fulfilment of human nature and of the divine will in the sonship of Christian experience. He does not dwell much on the function of the Spirit

in overthrowing the visible and invisible rulers of the darkness and in establishing God's kingdom. The power of the Spirit — and the Spirit is invariably a power — is manifested preëminently in the creation of the new life which the Spirit reveals and imparts to those who believe in the Son of God.

The significant feature of this conception is the collocation of the Christian experience with the Spirit from beginning to end. The experience of the Spirit was not a further boon bestowed at baptism upon those who by some earlier act of faith had been justified and thereby freed from legalism. The distinctive note or atmosphere of the new Christian order was sonship towards God. *Because you are sons* (no longer minors or slaves, under the Law), because the distant feeling of legalism has been now superseded by filial trust, *God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father.* The filial

standing of Christians is not only proved but realized, Paul argues, by the Spirit of Christ as a fact and force in their experience. Their consciousness of the Spirit is the basis and criterion of true sonship. The reason why such trust in the Father exists in any life is because God has elicited and encouraged it by the revelation of himself in Jesus Christ. Faith had its stages and degrees of confidence for Paul, but from the first it was a product of the Spirit; without the Spirit it could not have existed for any Christian.

He knew this from his own experience. The knowledge of his messianic vocation and character had been a revelation even to Jesus, at his baptism. To Peter also, who knew the Lord in the flesh, it had come as a revelation: *Flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but my Father in heaven.* Paul was conscious of having received it in exactly the same way,

not by argument, but by revelation; the knowledge of Christ as Lord and Spirit meant spiritual apprehension, and he never doubted that the same principle underlay the life of Christians in general. However their experience began, it could not be experience till it started with the faith which the Spirit alone could produce. For *no man is able to say, Jesus is Lord, except in the Holy Spirit.*

The second (*b*) aspect of the relationship appears in the fact that the experiences of the Spirit which Paul verified throughout his mission served to authenticate the faith of Gentile Christians. If they could enjoy the promised Spirit of Christ, it proved that they had a right and standing of their own within the new messianic realm of Jesus. This is the point of Galatians iii : 14 f. The argument does not appeal to any words of Jesus. For his conception of the Spirit, as evoking a faith

independent of the Law, Paul had even less authority, so far as the word of Jesus went, than for his mission to the Gentiles. His authority for the former rested upon his own experience of all that the Lord had been to him and done for him, and he based the latter upon his consciousness that this experience was neither a personal nor a Jewish idiosyncrasy. For both he sought and found proofs in the Old Testament. Thus from the well-known passages in Genesis he once argued that prior to the Law God had promised the blessing of justification by faith, and that to Gentiles. Was it not written that *Abraham's faith was reckoned to him for righteousness?* Then it followed (i) that those who have the same faith in God are sons of Abraham, whether they are of Jewish or of pagan birth, and (ii) that the Mosaic Law, which was subsequent to this basis, became obsolete when Christ arrived to realize the original

condition of faith. This method of reasoning is quite characteristic of Paul's rabbinical training. When Agrippa II asked Rabbi Eliezer why circumcision was not one of the ten commandments, if God attached such value to it as the Jews alleged, the rabbi is said to have retorted that circumcision had been enjoined prior to the ten commandments, and to have quoted as his authority the words of Exodus xix : 5 : *If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, then shall you be a peculiar treasure unto me from among all peoples.* This covenant, said the rabbi, was one of circumcision. Paul is using the same kind of argument (in Galatians iii : 6 f.) in order to prove that the Law was inferior and subsequent to the primary requirement of faith. The promise to Abraham, he declares, came 430 years before the Law. It anticipated the gospel. His contention is that the Law, instead of being, as his opponents held,

the sole revelation of God's will, was only a transitory phase; previous to the Law, God had dealt with men (as represented in Abraham) on the basis of a grace which implied personal faith, and this basis was now ratified to the full in the revelation of Jesus, whose death meant the supersession of the Law as a means of attaining righteousness. The one alternative now open to men was the Law or Christ. If they chose the Law, they were done with Christ. If they chose Christ, they were done with the Law. Furthermore, in choosing Christ, that is, in accepting the basis of grace and faith for their religion, they were simply reverting to the original purpose of God, which evokes the faith, not of assent to a juridical process, but of personal trust. Had Paul made the saving faith of his theory anything less than that, he would have been reintroducing a modified legalism.

There is yet another (*c*) aspect of the

matter. Paul had a *gnosis* or philosophy of religion which spanned heaven and earth. In several incidental allusions to this scheme of thought, the pre-Christian condition of humanity is described as a state of subjection to *the elements* or spirit-rulers *of the world*, that is, according to the Jewish tradition which Paul follows, cosmic spirits or angelic powers such as those who were the medium of the Law for Israel, or those who as *gods many and lords many* exerted upon pagans a fascination which passed into idolatry. To the latter cosmic powers Paul in one passage (1 Corinthians ii : 8 f.) actually attributes the crime of the crucifixion. Their worship with its ritual — for Paul even refers the punctilious system of festivals and seasons to the seductive influence of these stars, etc., which regulated their recurrence — was contrary to the worship of the true God. Their wisdom or religious philosophy had no place for the

Cross. But the crucifixion really proved their undoing. God *forgave all of us our trespasses, cancelling the bond of legal enactments which stood against us—that he set aside, nailing it to the cross; disarming the Principalities and Powers, he exposed them and triumphed over them openly in the cross.* This is one of the dark corners or dark passages in Paul, but the annulment of the Law evidently became for him part of a cosmic and supernatural drama; the crucifixion was the divine discomfiture of the angelic and demonic powers which had hitherto dominated man; Christ was now superior to all principalities and powers, and at the end he would be worshipped by them. Two practical inferences follow. In the first place, no Christian need fear the malign influence of such angelic powers. Paul is sure that *neither death* (when such spirits are most active), *nor life, nor angels, nor Principalities, nor*

Powers shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Jesus is now Lord of the universe which was created by means of him, and no power in that universe is more potent than the tie between him and his redeemed. The latter share in his spiritual nature, which is proof against all lower spirits. But this relief from the fears which haunted the imagination implied that believers must own Jesus as the sole medium of revelation and communion. Paul's argument is that every other kind of religious appeal ought to be a dead letter to them. Any recourse to the ministry of angels, or any subservience to the legalism and idolatry which they foster, would impugn that unique position of Jesus as Lord and as *the* Spirit which is implicit in Christian faith, and which, on animistic principles, involves the dislodgment of the evil power from human life.

There are traces of this conception in the Gospels (see also a passage like Acts x: 38), where the work of Jesus on earth is occasionally regarded as the undoing of Satan's power and the overthrow of demons. But Paul develops it characteristically in connexion with his inherited Christology of a divine being, a preëxistent heavenly Man, who generously stooped to enter the poverty and thralldom of men in order to redeem them from the tyranny of the dark, evil world-powers. The noticeable thing in this theosophy is that his conceptions of the preëxistent Christ did not view Jesus as the incarnate Spirit of God; they drew rather on the ideas of wisdom and the Logos than on the Spirit, although, in his implicit polemic against the Philonic reading of Genesis i–ii, the apostle defined the last Adam as essentially Spirit, the archetype and head of a spiritual race. The word of the Cross was also a

word of the Spirit, and no spiritual theosophy, however plausible and imposing, was valid if it ignored the former. This is the point, and it is a barbed point, of the passages to which we have just referred. They reflect a cosmic rather than a forensic view of the work of Christ, but they indicate the central truth on which all the lines of Paul's thought converge, namely, that the relation between Christ and men begins in the Spirit and in faith.

It is by thinking out such conceptions of the Spirit and of eschatology, by thinking them together, and by focussing everything in their light, that we arrive at a historical estimate of Paulinism. In both, in his ideas of the Spirit and of the last things, Paul is at once most himself and most a Christian of his own age. Their interaction is the clue to his distinctive beliefs. A modern finds it, perhaps, hardest to think himself back into the eschatological world

of the apostle, and yet this effort of the imagination is essential, for it is there that Paul reveals himself, not as Greek, nor as Hebrew, nor even as Roman, but as a Christian of the first generation.

A single instance will serve to make this clear. From his father he inherited the privilege of Roman citizenship. Occasionally he appealed to this in an emergency, and it must undoubtedly have been one factor in developing his large vision of mankind; but his real pride was to be, in Dante's phrase, "a citizen of that Rome where Christ is Roman." In his last letter, written from Rome, he protests: *Our commonwealth lies in heaven, whence we look eagerly for the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour.* His breadth of mind enabled him to seize strategic points throughout the empire for the propaganda of the gospel, but we must be strictly on our guard against supposing that it ever occurred to

him to regard Christianity as a new religion for the empire. His eschatology ruled any notion of that kind out of his horizon. The churches scattered over the world were conceived by him rather as settled in an evil and transient age, like so many outposts and colonies of the heavenly commonwealth which was ere long to be established by the return of Jesus. Their duty was to wait and be loyal till they were relieved. The revival hymn with its refrain, —

> "Hold the fort, for I am coming,"
> Jesus signals still;
> Wave the answer back to heaven,
> "By Thy grace we will!" —

may be a crude representation of Paul's eschatology, but it lies leagues nearer to what he and his contemporaries believed than any attempt to read back into his thought the anachronism of a purified empire as the ideal and aim of the evangel.

His perspective was not imperialist. Still, it was singularly free from any narrowness or nationalism. In one passage, indeed (Romans ix–xi), the keen Jewish feeling which had led him to rehabilitate the Law (perhaps, in a recoil from antinomianism), even after he had apparently discredited it, forced him into a similar antinomy; he set himself to think out a special future of honour for the Jewish nation within the course of God's redeeming purpose. The religious philosophy of history which breathes through the passage throbs with strong personal emotion. It has been said that if Paul had not spent himself in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, he would undoubtedly have shed his blood with other natives of Tarsus on the walls of Jerusalem in 70 A. D., and not in 64 A. D. upon the sand of the Roman arena. Certainly his religious patriotism flickered up within his Christianity. It sur-

vived the treatment he received from Jews and Judaists alike, and his thoughts acquire additional interest when we find them, as here, crossed by a generous devotion to his old nation. He struggled hard to prove that its exclusion was only temporary; all Israel must eventually be saved! But this divergence into a nationalistic outlook was an aside from his mature belief that all such distinctions of race were abolished by the gospel. *There is no place for Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman; no, Christ is all and in all.* He dreamed of no other imperialism than this. To be a member of such a divine realm was to possess the Spirit or life of Christ; no less was implied in the universal and inward character of faith as trust in the royal Father of all. As he puts it, in one of those profound definitions which seem to drop almost casually from him, *we* (not the

Jews) *are the circumcision* (i. e., in modern phrase, the true church), *who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* To him, the Spirit, the gospel, and Jesus were correlative terms; the one involved the others. Wherever he has occasion to define any elements of his gospel, *the Spirit* is either on his lips or implied in what he says. It vibrates through his ideas upon the inspiration of the Old Testament, on the knowledge of God, on the preëxistent Christ, on the church, and on prophecy, as well as on the special topics which we have just been discussing. The one subject with which he, like the primitive church, never associates it expressly is nature. But with this exception, his idea of the Spirit rays out on practically all the aspects of life which he had occasion to correlate with his Christianity; even into his theory of the Law in relation to the

death of Christ, where his Pharisaic prepossessions did not furnish any suggestion or support for a doctrine of the Spirit, he contrives, as we have seen, to introduce it. No other conception, it may be argued, will enable us to grasp so effectively either the points of contact between Paul and the primitive church or the equally striking points of departure.

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What, it may be asked in conclusion, was the immediate result of Paulinism? How far did these conceptions, in their characteristic form, enter into the piety even of the churches which were under the apostle's direct or indirect influence? We have few data for anything like an adequate answer, but it is plain that several of them proved too high and difficult for the popular Christianity of the age, and it would be hazardous to assume that Paul's churches or even his coadjutors shared all

his views. The subsequent literature of the primitive church shows that the majority of Paul's distinctive conceptions were either misunderstood, or dropped, or modified, as the case might be, in the course of a few decades. Paulinism was a type, it was not typical, of early Christian thought. Thus, even the universalism of the later church was not based on Paul's dialectic about the Law. He fought that battle so successfully that the issue never rose again, but it was the result, not the method, which his successors appropriated as their own. His psychological treatment of sin and the flesh, together with the faith-mysticism which it involved, proved also too subtle for the average piety of the church, until the Gnostics laid hold of his distinction between the spiritual and the natural man for their own alien purposes. The Spirit continued to be conceived as prophetic in the main, and even the partial approxima-

tion of the Fourth Gospel to Paul's idea of the indwelling Christ moves on different lines. His view of the Old Testament did not satisfy the church at large. He did not scruple to allegorize parts of it for his own purposes, but he never went the length of allegorizing it all, as some of his successors did. Naturally, too, when the stress of the controversy with Judaism had passed, his dialectic on the Law fell into the background before the need of conceiving Christianity as a new law. The death of Christ ceased to be regarded as a sacrifice, or, if it was, its significance was otherwise interpreted, and the antinomian tendencies of ultra-Paulinism were counteracted by a more moralistic conception.

The reasons for this comparative abeyance of Paulinism within the early church do not lie wholly in the Jewish idiosyncrasies of the apostle's thought. Nor should they be regarded necessarily as in every

case a proof of religious deterioration. In the first place, the tremendous spiritual crisis through which Paul broke into the faith of Christ was not a normal experience among Christians; and although his language upon this and many another aspect of the gospel was capable of fruitful applications, as that of any classic must be, the anguish of a soul broken down by the accusing witness of conscience was by no means the uniform preparation for faith in Jesus Christ. Devout souls then as now put their trust in God on quieter lines. Their simple relation to Christ required nothing of Paul's dialectic about the curse of the law. Again, it must also be remembered that while several of Paul's arguments lost much if not all of their original point, once they were carried by the flight of time beyond the radius of his polemic against the Jews and Jewish Christians of his own day, and while some of his terms

and ideas became more or less foreign to the next generation, his profoundly Christian spirit made Christians feel at home with him even when their doctrinal position differed widely from his own. Something underlay Paul's speculative conceptions which outlived them. And even parts of them survived the process of transplanting. The subsequent Epistles and the Gospels are enough to show how far-reaching were some of his peculiar beliefs, and how modes of thought which he originated continued to permeate more or less directly the various movements of early Christian theology. But all this does not invalidate the historical conclusion that Paulinism as a whole stood almost as far apart from the Christianity which immediately followed it as from that which preceded it. There is one exception, but even that is only apparent. Marcion, an original and influential leader, did claim to carry out Paul's principles.

But his antipathy to Judaism led him to break the continuity of history and to set up a wrathful God of the Old Testament in opposition to the gracious God and Father of Jesus Christ. His religion therefore became a distorted exaggeration of antitheses in the Paulinism which he honestly admired and heartily believed. To him Paul was the one apostle. His doctrine, however, seems in reality to have been an ultra-Paulinism from which his honoured master would have instinctively recoiled. The phenomenon of Marcion's appearance in the second century is a proof that it has been the fate of Paul, as it has been the fate of many a thinker within and without the church, to set in motion tendencies and ideas with which his name was linked, but with which he could not possibly have brought himself to sympathize.

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MODERN RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS

EDITED BY
DR. AMBROSE W. VERNON

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